

press. Part of my inquiry to Secretary Lew is what has transpired since that point in time. Have the employees at the Internal Revenue Service who released this information been challenged for their actions? Have they been admonished? Have they been treated appropriately for what clearly seems to be an inappropriate release of private taxpayer information?

The second example was the IRS turned over several applications for nonprofit status, including the pending applications for tax-exempt status, for several groups. They were released and ended up in the hands of an organization called ProPublica. Again, while the applications for nonprofit status are available to the public after an exemption is granted, they are protected as tax return information while that application is pending. This organization then published that information, despite that that is what I understand to be a felony. Publishing unauthorized tax returns or return information is a felony punishable by up to 5 years in prison or a fine up to \$5,000 or both. Again, my question of the Treasury Secretary is that I have not been able to confirm any action has been taken, any recommendation from the Treasury Department, the Justice Department, that anybody be prosecuted for publishing private taxpayer information.

Finally, we learned earlier this year, again, of something described as an inadvertent IRS disclosure related to releasing one page of the schedule B showing donors to the Republican Governors Association. These are alarming in and of themselves and become more significant to me, having learned that there is a bias, a treatment different of one taxpayer over another at the IRS. While it is important for us to determine, and I am anxious to read the inspector general's report as to the findings about what occurred with the singling out of certain organizations for a different kind of treatment at the IRS, I also think it is important for us to pursue the issue of the release of information that comes from one organization's filing that is inappropriate to release and ultimately its being used by an organization that apparently has a different political perspective than the one whose application is pending.

Again, I would raise this issue that now we know something is wrong at the IRS, there is more to be discovered as we look at how this information was released. Were people who released it punished? Is there any pending criminal action against the individuals who published this information?

I am surprised by the circumstance we find ourselves in. I never would have expected this from the Internal Revenue Service, which must be, needs to be, and has to be above the political fray.

The IRS can never be an instrument of any political party, of any administration, or of any political philosophy. All Americans have the right to as-

sume that the IRS, which has great powers and consequences upon the taxpayers of this country, is operating in a neutral, fair, and appropriate manner.

The circumstances now present themselves in a way that we have to wonder about more than just these three examples. These three examples are ones now worthy of additional concern by Members of the Senate, and, even more importantly, by the IRS and individuals within the administration who are responsible for the management and governance of the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury Department.

I have submitted a series of questions to Secretary Lew. As a member of the Appropriations Committee responsible for the Internal Revenue Service's appropriations, I look forward to seeing what those answers are and to make certain appropriate action is taken in regard to individuals who apparently have violated the public trust, with the understanding that all of us expect the privacy the Internal Revenue Service is to provide.

Once again I want to outline that while we learned something over the weekend that is very troublesome, there may be much more to this story that has yet to be told, and I am anxious to see the answers that come from the Treasury Department in regard to the Internal Revenue Service.

In fact, I encourage all Members of the Senate to reach the same conclusion—no matter their political leaning or philosophical bent, whether Republican or Democrat—that the Internal Revenue Service with its tremendous enforcement capabilities and the tremendous consequences it has to the American people in the decisions it makes always be above the political fray.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the opportunity to be on the Senate floor today to outline an extended concern I have about actions at the Internal Revenue Service. I anxiously wait for the Treasury Department to respond and provide answers to our subcommittee, committee, and the full Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, on December 14 of last year the world watched in horror as we received news that in Sandy Hook, CT, 20 6- and 7-year-olds as well as 6 of their teachers and professionals who were charged with caring for them were killed at the hands of a gunman wielding a semi-automatic rifle armed with multiple 30-round clips. Twenty-six people died in that school that day, and the world has not been the same since.

The State of Connecticut, as well as many other States, including New York and Colorado, passed some of the strongest gun laws in trying to bring some common sense to our gun laws in a generation. However, this body, in the days since Sandy Hook, has done nothing.

We debated a bill which was supported by 90 percent of Americans that would extend background checks to most all gun sales in this country so we could make sure criminals and people with serious mental illness didn't have their hands on guns. Even though the measure received 55 votes here in the Senate, it didn't become a law because of a strange rule we have requiring 60 votes for most everything that comes through this place.

While everything we have done here has been driven by the memory of what happened to those 20 beautiful little first-graders in our State, the fact is 28 people died that day—including the gunman and his mother—but that is still less than those who die every day in this country at the hands of gun violence.

The everyday deaths that occur in our cities and suburbs throughout our country have become like raindrops in this Nation. We have become callously used to the fact that people die due to guns in our country at a greater rate than almost anywhere else in the world.

I intend to come down to this floor week after week until we get our act together and do what the American public wants us to do, which is to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and try to get the most dangerous weapons back into the hands of law enforcement and the military. I am going to come down here week after week and tell the simple stories of the dozens of people who lose their lives every day due to gun violence.

Since December 14—that awful, terrible day—3,966 people have died at the hands of a gun. By the end of today—depending on how tonight goes across this country—that number could be 4,000. We are averaging about 30 a day all across this country.

While people have gotten to know the people in Sandy Hook due to some amazing reporting that has taken place, people don't know the stories of the people who die every day. So I am going to come down here every week and tell the stories of those people to give voice to these victims.

First I will focus on Hartford, CT, where a few days ago—May 8—Felix Jesus III was killed when he was simply going to sell a Samsung electric tablet to someone who agreed to buy it over craigslist. His father said this guy kept calling and calling. The guy arranged for my son to meet him, and he said he would be right back.

At around 8 p.m. on May 8, police received a 911 call, and they found him dead in his car suffering from a single gunshot wound.

His father said:

They took my son, my only son. Now his kids are left alone with nobody except for us, that's just not right.

Felix had two sons, a 1-year-old and a 2-year-old. He was going to sell a tablet computer, and he was shot in the head and died, leaving a 1-year-old and 2-year-old behind. He was doing everything he was supposed to do. He graduated from high school, and he worked at a local hotel. He was engaged to be married and left behind two children.

The day before, on May 7, out in northern California, a 45-year-old man fatally shot his wife and their two young daughters in their home, and he got away. His wife Sandy and their two daughters, Shelby, who was 8, and Shasta, who was 4, had been shot multiple times.

There had been calls out to the home for domestic disturbances in the recent weeks. The kids were pulled out of school. Something was clearly going on in that house. This guy was a dangerous guy. In 2002 he had been charged with distribution of drugs, felony possession of a firearm, and possessing a machine gun, and he pleaded guilty. He had been in prison for 10 months.

We are still trying to figure out, only about a week later, if this guy was supposed to have weapons in the first place. We know, even if he was banned from buying weapons, it would not have been that hard for him to get them. We cannot say for certain how he came across the weapons that killed his wife and two kids. Even if he was, as a criminal, on one of these lists, it would not have been that hard for him to simply go to a local gun show or go on the Internet and buy a weapon. If he went either of those routes, according to current law, it is likely he never would have been checked to see if he was a criminal.

Sandy, 34, Shelby, 8, and Shasta, 4, were killed on May 7.

Steven Jones was killed that same day. He was a lifelong resident of Charlestown, MA. He was 21 years old. His friends said everybody loved him. No one would ever expect something like this to happen to him. He wasn't in the streets. He was into sports and partying. This was a shock. Steven Jones was breaking up a fight when a gun went off, and he was killed. His uncle said he was the definition of a good kid. He was there trying to break up a fight, and he ended up getting shot. He was 21 years old.

By now everybody knows what happened over the weekend in New Orleans. A gunman opened fire on people who were marching in a neighborhood Mother's Day parade. The FBI described it as a flareup of street violence which resulted in 19 people being wounded, 10 men, 7 women, a boy, and a girl. The children were both 10 years old. Luckily they were just grazed by the bullets, and they were reported to be in good condition.

There are so many weapons on our streets today, and most of them are illegal. These shootings happen day in

and day out. Mostly it is not the same situation as what happened in New Orleans. Mostly it is not 19 people being shot at a parade. Mostly it is just one-on-one gun violence, but we refuse to do anything about it.

Since the tragedy in Newtown, CT, 3,966 have died from guns, and our response is nothing. It was awful enough to read about the violence at that Mother's Day parade, but I want everybody to know what kind of Mother's Day Nicole Hockley, the mother of Dylan, had on Sunday, what kind of Mother's Day it was for Nelba Marquez-Greene, the mother of Ana, what kind of Mother's Day Francine Wheeler had without her son Ben or Jackie Barden had without her son Daniel.

As awful as it was to think of 19 people being shot in New Orleans at a Mother's Day parade, it was just as horrifying to read an op-ed these four mothers submitted yesterday on Mother's Day. They wrote:

The gravity of the moment that comes with holding your child for the first time—looking into their eyes, rocking them to sleep, allowing their breath to fill your heart, marveling at how nature has taken a part of you and a part of your husband to create someone uniquely beautiful—the seriousness of that moment is only eclipsed by the moment you discover that your little boy or little girl is forever gone, just a few hours after watching them wave at you from the school bus window.

These mothers said:

We are constantly asked, "How do you go on?" The answer lies in the promise we made to our children when they were born, and perhaps more important, the promise we made when they were so senselessly taken from us.

That promise for those four mothers is to do something and try to make sure that never ever happens again. The promise they made was bigger than that. They are trying to do something for the 4,000 families who have lost sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, husbands, and wives since Sandy Hook happened.

Nicole, Nelba, Francine, and Jackie came to Washington, DC, day after day, week after week, and pleaded with this place to do something. They were joined over that period of time by hundreds of other family members also representing the 3,966 families who have been grieving since then.

There has been some level of optimism that we have the capacity here to revisit this legislation; that sometime later this year we can take another shot at trying to make sure another Sandy Hook doesn't happen. We can take another moment to reflect on whether it is OK that thousands of criminals can go onto the Internet or walk into a gun show and get a gun without ever having to show they have the legal capacity to do that. I hope that is the case.

As a means to getting people to that moment where we can try to have some coming together on behalf of all of these families, I encourage everybody

to read this op-ed written by Nicole and Nelba and Francine and Jackie. It is called "Keeping A Mother's Promise." Because if, after reading this, people in this Chamber can look these mothers in the eye and say that in the wake of Sandy Hook and in the wake of 4,000 other deaths since then, our answer in the Senate is to do nothing, then what on Earth are we here for?

Mr. President, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDRAISING

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, Friday's Washington Post reported that Secretary Sebelius of the Department of Health and Human Services "has gone, hat in hand, to health industry [executives], asking them to make large financial donations to help with the effort to implement President Obama's landmark health care law. . . ."

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Washington Post article following my remarks.

The article further said that the "unusual fundraising push" comes after Congress has repeatedly rejected the administration's requests for additional funds to set up the Affordable Health Care Act. The article said many of the Secretary's calls have recruited support for Enroll America, described as the most prominent nonprofit working on the health care law's implementation. Its president, Anne Filipic—the article goes on to say—joined the group in January after serving as White House deputy director for public engagement.

Today, the New York Times included an article by Robert Pear: "Cabinet Secretary Solicits Large Donations to Publicize Health Care Law." I ask unanimous consent to have that article printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. In the article, it said:

. . . Ms. Sebelius had made calls soliciting support from the health care industry, including insurance and pharmaceutical executives.

. . . a spokesman for Ms. Sebelius, said she had suggested that health care executives and others support the work of Enroll America, a private nonprofit group that shares the president's goal of securing coverage for people without insurance.

An insurance executive said that some insurers had been asked for \$1 million [in] donations, and that "bigger companies have been asked for a lot more."